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The invention relates to a host computer system which receives information, rasterizes it, compresses it and transmits it to a portable device which decompresses the image to display it on a screen. The image can be decompressed in whole or in parts to be viewed as the user scrolls through the image. An electronic touch screen keyboard is featured, which is used to input text characters in a text area on the screen of the device. Thereafter, text is transmitted to specific areas on a virtual browser in the host computer as a string of characters, or individually, with refreshed images of the virtual browser sent back to the device for each transmission. The host computer system is also capable of translating locations on the touch screen of the device into text characters or commands. The image received by the virtual browser is compressed in different amounts, with text and graphics compressed separately in different ways to be sent to the device, which can store and view received images. Icons on the device representing commands can be linked to icons or menu items on the virtual browser, by the device translating and linking to the host computer, or by the host computer translating.